



STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TED STILWILL, DIRECTOR

DATE: December 5, 2003 SP 2004-02
TO: School Food Authorities – Please route to individuals approving
Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications
FROM: Julia Thorius, Chief, Bureau of Food and Nutrition
Patti Harding, Lead Consultant
SUBJECT: Procedures for Sharing Information with the **hawk-i**/Medicaid Program

In Iowa there is an opportunity for school districts to help link children to low-cost or free health care coverage through the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program Application. Last year about 75 districts referred 6,652 families. You are in a unique position to help uninsured students in your school get health insurance through this initiative. Iowa schools serve thousands of low-income children in school lunch and breakfast programs and can play a vital role in outreach for Medicaid and **hawk-i** (Iowa's State Children's Health Insurance Program). As a matter of fact, between 65-75 percent of all uninsured, low-income children participate in the school meals program or have a sibling that participates. Iowa's uninsured population continues to grow, as is the nation's, due to layoffs and increasing health insurance premiums. Research tell us:

- 8 out of 10 uninsured children are from working families.
- 75% of these families do not have access to an employer-provided health plan that covers children.
- Iowans spend more of their own money for health coverage; about 35% more than the average U.S. worker who has family coverage.
- Medical bills are one of the top reasons families declare bankruptcy.

More children may be eligible for publicly funded health insurance programs than thought; even a working family of four earning up to \$36,800 may qualify for **hawk-i**. On the following pages, you will find a map showing the number of uninsured children in your county, and a fact sheet with data on the uninsured that links health insurance to school performance. Please take a few moments to look through this information and see why your help is such a vital link to this effort.

Clearly, health insurance is an important issue that affects many of your students and their families. You can help these families when your school staff sends the name and address of parents/guardians, who have expressed interest in learning about **hawk-i** from the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program Application to **hawk-i** customer service.

Enclosed is a copy of the agreement outlining the procedures. You will find signatures in place from the Department of Human Services and the Iowa Department of Education with a place for the LDA (Local Determining Agency, i.e. the School Food Authority or CACFP Institutions) to sign. The LDA has the option to release names of eligible households to **hawk-i**/Medicaid. If the LDA chooses to release the information, they must sign this agreement and include a copy to the **hawk-i**/Medicaid authorities with the information that is released. The LDA must also keep a copy of the agreement and the list released on file with their Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications. These materials should be on file for three years or until any audits are resolved. The LDA may not release the name of any parents/guardians who have signed the waiver requesting that their information not be released. These signed waivers (do not release my name) are to remain on file at the LDA with the free and reduced price meal applications.

The agreement outlines the procedures for sharing the information. These procedures are summarized below:

1. Identify the students eligible for free or reduced price meals whose parents/guardians have allowed disclosure as of **October 31, 2003**. The attached data submission format is to be used to prepare the list for hard copy or electronic submission. Waivers for households not allowing disclosure should be retained in the LDA files.
2. Attach to the list or send separately a signed copy of the agreement. Retain one copy of the agreement and the list for the LDA.
3. Send or e-mail the list on or before **December 30, 2003** in an Excel format (attached) to **MAXIMUS, hawk-i's** third party administrator, **William Hermann at williamhermann@maximus.com** and cc: **barbarafox-goldizen@maximus.com**.
4. Information on additional students identified as eligible may be sent at anytime during the school year.

We want to work together to identify children who may be eligible and offer their families the support and assistance they need to get health insurance and significantly increase the percent of schools participating in this important effort. The Bureau of Food and Nutrition encourages schools to share the information with **hawk-i** unless the household requested on the application that the information not be shared. Please contact Patti Harding at 515-281-4754 or patti.harding@ed.state.ia.us if additional information is desired. You may also call **hawk-i** at 800-257-8563. **No information, lists or copies of the agreement should be sent to the Department of Education, Bureau of Food and Nutrition.**